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4 December 1963

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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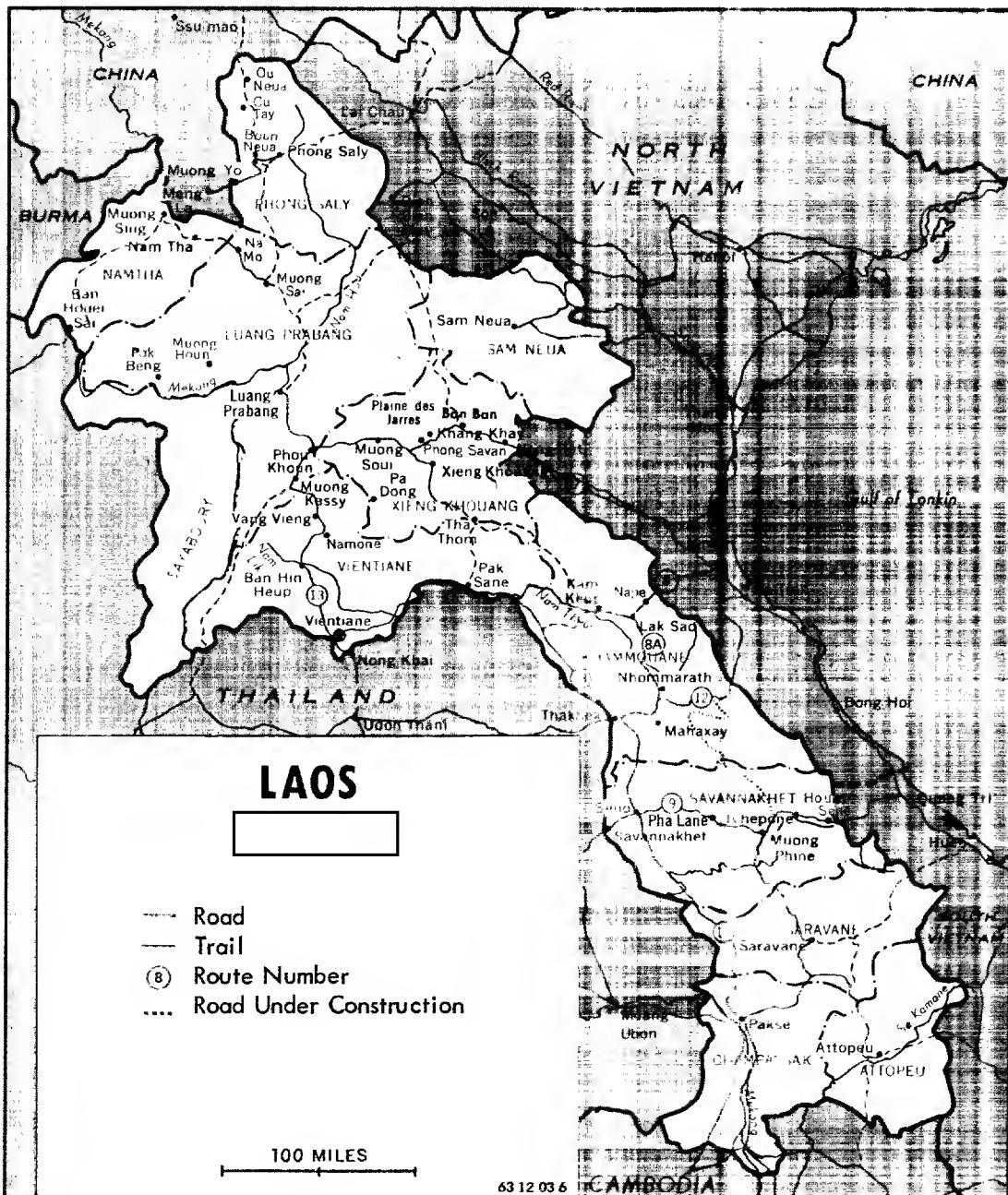
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DAILY BRIEF

Laos: Right-wing and neutralist forces continue to make gains against Communist military positions.

Neutralist forces, which recently captured Vang Vieng, north of Vientiane, have advanced 16 miles farther north and now control strategic Route 13 from the capital to this point.

In central Laos, Lao army troops have captured Kam Keut, a Pathet Lao strongpoint at the western end of Route 8. Right-wing forces, reinforced by an air-borne battalion from Savannakhet, have advanced toward Lak Sao, a depot on the Communists' supply route to the Nhommarath region.

The Pathet Lao have not attempted major counter-action. On 30 November, however, their military leader General Singkapo charged that the US and the rightists were attempting to sabotage current neutralist - Pathet Lao negotiations and held the rightists "fully responsible for the consequences!"

Iraq: (Sharp competition for power is hampering the new Iraqi regime's attempts to establish itself firmly.)

(Anti-Baathist army officers are still unhappy over the role that Baathists play in the regime. A non-Baathist faction in the government is pressing for reduction of Baathist influence and for the arrest and trial of leaders of the extremist Baath faction.)

(Probably as a result of this pressure, Baathists are being eliminated from key positions in the intelligence and security services, a new army deputy chief of staff has been appointed, and a number of army officers retired.)

(An army brigade considered loyal to President Arif has been brought to Baghdad to counter the influence of the Baathist-led 4th Division, which had a major part in the 18 November coup. There has been no wholesale purge of Baathists in the army, and government spokesmen reiterate the line that the coup was not directed against any party.)

(Baathists in the government, headed by Defense Minister Hardan Tikriti and Vice President Bakr, reportedly are pressing for gradual resumption of Baathist control and for continuation of Baath policies. Tikriti is also reported to be protecting Baathists arrested by security officials.)

(President Arif and Premier Tahir Yahya are trying to maintain a neutral position. Yahya believes that the present situation may eventually lead to another coup.)

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Argentina: President Illia may be ousted if he does not take constructive action.

Ambassador McClintock foresees an inevitable trend toward the left under the present cabinet. [Former Presidents Aramburu and Frondizi have expressed similar concern.] Frondizi believes that a leftward trend could provoke another military coup.

The government's haste and procedure in annulling Argentina's oil contracts with foreign firms has encouraged extremist elements and caused dismay among many moderates.

Illia, contrary to earlier statements, chose his cabinet almost exclusively on the basis of loyalty to his minority party. Few ministers are able or experienced.

Frondizi considers Illia personally very sound and well-intentioned and believes it "not impossible" that Illia may yet act in time.

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NOTES

Communist China: Communist China's annual parliamentary session ended yesterday on the same cautious and defensive note that has characterized all Chinese public statements this fall. A press communiqué repeated a two-year-old claim that the economy "has begun to take an all-around turn for the better," insisted that China's policy of relying on its own efforts had proved successful, and asserted that China has won "tremendous successes" in international affairs. The evidence cited to support these claims is vague and unconvincing.

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DAILY BRIEF

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Netherlands-NATO: The Dutch Government has decided to join the current exploratory discussions on the proposed NATO multilateral nuclear force, thus raising the number of participating nations to eight. The Dutch have been averse to taking any steps which would give the Germans access to nuclear weapons. Dutch military officials have been fearful that participation would necessitate diverting substantial resources from their conventional forces.

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